

INSIDE: DISCO PICTURES, PARIS HILTON, AND 50 STRAIGHT DAYS OF CHILI

THE BELL RINGER

Montgomery Bell Academy

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Totomoi inducted nine new members on Tuesday, March 1st.



MBA inducted twenty members into Cum Laude on Tuesday, March 8th.

MBA Inducts New Members into Totomoi, Cum Laude

by CURTIS LANE
Editor-in-Chief

On Tuesday, March 1st, MBA's honorary fraternity, Totomoi, held its spring taping ceremony. Five seniors and four juniors were inducted. They are (front row left to right) Scott Hearon, Andy Alsentzer, Caldwell Tanner (middle row left to right) Read Ezell, Andy Snyder, Curtis Lane (back row left to right) Matthew Clair, Kevin Seitz, and Jonathan Ray.

The society was founded in 1954 by Robert McNeilly, Jr. ('50) and Dr. Inman Fox ('50) and recognizes juniors and seniors who have shown outstanding leadership in academic achievement, athletics, service to the school, community service, and appreciation for the arts. These students received a membership pin for their accomplishment, emblematic of their inclusion in the list of worthy students and faculty in Totomoi.

On Tuesday, March 8th in assembly, MBA's Cum Laude chapter, chartered in

1980, inducted 18 students and two faculty members into its ranks. The new members have consistently displayed superior academic achievement during their time at MBA. Latin teacher and *Bell Ringer* advisor Andy Gathier spoke to the audience of students, parents, and faculty. He challenged them to think critically before creating "perceptions," adding that "all things are continually becoming and we must understand the concept which makes these changing things identifiable if we are to perceive them and understand them accurately and wisely."

The new inductees to Cum Laude were (from left to right in bottom picture) Miss Sarah Ellery, Jason Wallace, Curtis Lane, John Lee, Pierce Sandwith, Will DeLoache, Kevin Seitz, Nick Power, Mr. Jeffrey Giouline, David Downing, David Wheeler, Jordan Klein, Caldwell Tanner, Hunter Branstetter, Matthew Doster, Matthew Doster, Kafkas Everest, Will Smith, Will Colton, and Andrew Pitman.

The OC Phenomenon: Why Do We Watch?

by KEVIN SEITZ
Assistant Features Editor

It's Thursday night just before 7:00, and I'm watching the closing minutes of *Seinfeld* with no intention of changing the channel. For some reason completely unbeknownst to me, I have an undeniable desire to spend the next hour completely enraptured by *The OC* (now in its second season). Why? I'm not sure exactly, and no one seems to fully understand how the show has swept the country (and more specifically, much of MBA) in a phenomenon of week-night television. Each 40-minute episode (even with its healthy dosage of commercials) commands the viewer not to question what's taking place along the beautiful shoreline of Orange County, California, as the opening credits begin to roll accompanied by the now-famous piano chords of Phantom Planet's "California."

The show defies categorization in many respects, full of contradictions, novelties, and clichés. It's quotably funny, but definitely a drama and not a comedy. The complicated familial relationships and far-flung story lines often sound direct from a bad soap opera, but no detestable day-time

excuse for entertainment could ever hope to capture such enthusiasm and truly emotional reactions from high-school guys. I don't say girls because multiple shows (*Sex*

in the City, *Friends*, etc.) have always been favorites of girls' nights, and held a place on their weekly planners, but I'd never heard a

group of guys genuinely discussing who would be getting back together with whom, much less meeting at someone's house to watch a serial TV drama together. How has the seemingly anti-hero of Seth Cohen, an emotional, comic-book loving, self-professed loser become a high-schooler so many try to relate to, and indeed, an idolized, and immensely respected character.

"I watch it because the over-exaggerated drama is funny, the girls are good looking, and I just like the premise," said Justin Hall. "It is a healthy mix, because the issues are relatable to real teenage life, but the situations are sometimes very far-flung." But still, why and how does it draw the sort of



(l to r) Ryan, Marissa, Seth, and Summer of *The OC*

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Letters to the Editor are encouraged, and can be delivered to its office, the Faculty Advisors, the Editors, or sent to bellringer@mc.montgomerybell.com (simply type "Bell Ringer" into First Class). These letters must be signed; The Bell Ringer neither publishes anonymous submissions of opinions or articles nor permits individuals to remain unidentified unless protected by other rules of confidentiality at MBA. Letters will be edited for length and clarity.

The staff of The Bell Ringer prepares all copy, headlines, and photographs at Montgomery Bell Academy. Franklin Web Printing in Franklin, Tennessee, prints the paper.

Letter to the Editor

To the Editor:

Clayton Lainhart is to be congratulated for the stinging intelligence of his "Modest Proposal" (*Bell Ringer* of 16th Feb., 2005). In an environment which is (at least among students) as acidically homophobic as MBA can often be, it requires a commendable level of courage and confidence in one's own writing ability to make such a point coherently and factually—especially in a medium as difficult as satire, and Mr. Lainhart did an excellent job.

The fact remains that open discussion of racism, bigotry, acceptance, and tolerance has become the order of the day at MBA through such institutions as the King Society and events like Cultural Awareness Week, but there remains shamefully little attention paid to those themes as they relate to gays, lesbians, and bisexuals. If Mr. Lainhart's clever channeling of Jonathan Swift prompts even one legitimate discussion in a Social Awareness Meeting about the fact that a gentleman cannot exist in modern society and be a homophobe—just as he cannot exist in modern society and be a racist or a misogynist—then *The Bell Ringer* will have done a great service to MBA's aim of producing sophisticated, intelligent graduates with a keen sympathy for and understanding of the world around them.

Christopher P. Schuller (MBA '04)
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England.

(The author was Editor-in-Chief of *The Bell Ringer* from 2003-2004. He also had a Letter to the Editor published in the February 28 issue of *The New Yorker* magazine.)

Auditions will be held for the 2005 Student-Directed One-Act Plays on Tuesday, March 29 and Wednesday, March 30 from 3:30-6.

Performance dates are April 28, 30 and May 1. No previous experience necessary. Just come read from the plays:

"The Murderer" by Ray Bradbury, directed by Rob Beasley
"Damage Control" by David Auburn, directed by Ben Turk and Jed Crumbo
"The Actor's Nightmare" by Christopher Durang, directed by Derek Pendergrass
& "For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls" by Christopher Durang, directed by Grant Thomas and Matthew

Congratulations to MBA's Scholarship Winners

Four MBA seniors were recently awarded prestigious college scholarships. Brock Baker won the Meridian Scholarship at the University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill). Andy Alvarado and Chad Hunt both won the Foundation Fellowship at the University of Georgia. Andy also was awarded the Juggan Scholarship at Vanderbilt University. Matthew Denton was recently awarded the Georgia M. Wilkoff Scholarship at the University of the South.

Theater Program Finishes First and Second At Theater Competition

MBA competed in the Tennessee High School Theater and Drama League competition this past weekend, March 11-13. "Blame," written by Andrew Nelson Berry, was chosen Best Actor of the competition, and *Damage Control* was named to the All-Star Cast List. "Let George Be Asleep" won first in the Intermediate Theater Division. Honored in this category to represent the district in the state tournament held in Cookeville on April 15. Overall, it was a fantastic MBA win in the Theater competition.

Mr. Galtner Receives Outstanding Educator Award

On Thursday, March 10th, Mr. Galtner was named an Outstanding Educator. This award by the Vanderbilt University Peabody College, Nashville, TN, was presented by Kristy White, MBA alumna and chairperson of the Board, while David Paulsell was the headmaster. The Educator would personally be inducted into the induction at MBA and at *The Bell Ringer*. He spends a lot of time at school, working in the classroom, helping out with the parent club, and working with the development, and his work goes largely unnoticed.

A Modest Response

by HUNTER BRANSTETTER
Features Editor

In my time writing for *The Bell Ringer*, I cannot remember a series of articles that has generated more discussion, more controversy than Clayton Lainhart's and James Banker's Modest Proposals. Within thirty minutes of the issue being distributed across campus, players and coaches alike cried out against "Scuffy McGee" for attacking the football program. The negative response to Clayton's article was slower to be vocalized but more vehement. Support for the articles flowed in as well, from student and faculty alike. These articles presented the MBA community with issues that ranged from respect and decency to freedom of press.

James' article was written under the penname Scuffy McGee to avoid the wrath of any coaches if the piece were misunderstood (which it was). It essentially espoused that MBA should drop all of aspects of academia and instead focus full time on football with a regimented schedule that revolved around workouts, protein, steroids, film and more workouts. Some anger about the proposal stemmed from the anonymity of the author; the piece was easier to see as an attack

when the writer was not identified. When I asked one senior football player why he was upset about a satire, he explained that if the author was not a football player, he had no right to write the article because he did not understand what it meant to be a part of the football program, and that if he played football, then he clearly lacked devotion and respect for the team. What those who were angry about the article failed to remember is that satire by its very nature is tongue-in-cheek, taking a situation to the extreme to make a point. James was not lashing out against the Big Red; instead he was emphasizing the flaws in programs such as those with avian mascots (eagles or owls for instance) that either place athletics before academics or give preferential/special treatment to their star athletes. MBA's motto is Gentleman,

Scholar, Athlete—in that order. The athlete, though important, is the least significant part of the motto, and neither the students nor the faculty lose sight of this fact.

Clayton's "Modest Proposal to Stop Homosexuality" is a more delicate subject. While Clayton undoubtedly uses strong, borderline-offensive language to shock the reader into seeing his point, the points themselves are valid. Diction aside, some dissenters argued that the piece belonged in an English class, not the school paper. But the article addresses a problem prevalent at MBA or any other all male institution—fear and anger toward gays. A former MBA teacher, when asked which he thought was the biggest problem at MBA—chauvinism or racism—

replied homophobia. Whether or not one agrees with their lifestyle, homosexuals are human beings and should be treated as such. Clayton's writing emphasizes the biggest factor to the belittling of homosexuals at school: the use of anti-gay rhetoric. At least once a day I hear something like "That English test was so gay" or "Mr. X was being such a fag today, I don't know why he was so mad." The use of a vocabulary that singles out one trait dehumanizes the target group on both conscious and sub-conscious levels. Using a different target such as a religion (which can be seen as nature or nurture, just like sexual orientation), a gentleman should never feel comfortable contemptuously saying, "Quit being such a Muslim" or "That was such a Hindu thing to do," and though I cringe to

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Fiction Serial

Messengers of Beckoning

Season II, Part V

by CHRIS PICKENS
Staff Writer*Milo Darian stands aghast in the library at Camelot, listening to Baal's words...*

Milo could feel Baal's strong grip latch onto him, pulling him down the stacks. It was still quiet in the library, but Milo thought he could hear something louder out in the halls. A great clattering and tumult, dulled by the stacks, tickled Milo's ears.

"He didn't already try to—"

"Yes, he did," Baal growled, looking over his shoulder at the last place the girl had been. Milo twisted to look, but she was gone. "Twenty minutes ago. I was shadowing the king, trying to feel the mood amongst the nobles. The assassin had help, but I don't know how much."

"Then everyone loyal went into an uproar."

"Everyone is tramping around, calling up the guards, locking themselves in the rooms. Total madness. A perfect atmosphere for a coup. Especially if the killer cannot be found."

Baal shoved the doors to the library open. Such a commotion flowed down the halls, a river of confusion. Men, women, nobles, animals, men with bows, women with pikes, all making noise at once. Several guardsmen were shouting above it all for everyone to seek their quarters, but to no avail.

Baal strode to the left, slipping through the commotion like a wraith. Milo tried to keep up.

"Then what can we do that the guards can't?"

"We have to catch the assassin, kill him before he can assume some control over the rebel nobles."

"So you think he will still be around?" Milo narrowly missed bumping into an old woman who swung a long cane about.

Baal turned his head slightly. "Probably still on horseback."

"Now?"

"No," Baal said as he threw open the Round Table chamber's doors again.

Arthur sat, surrounded by scribes, lower nobles, soldiers, all clamoring, pointing at maps, pledging allegiance. Arthur looked up when they came in.

"Stop!" His bellow ended all noise in the room without a second shout. Lowering his hands, his eyes deeply fatigued, he said, "What would you have me do?"

"Keep some men in the garrison. You will need them." Baal did not move, only leaned on his staff. Milo could not remember his having it in the library. "Take the rest and flush along the river until the bend. But be wary of the south, for I fear a greater

number might find its way to your doorstep while we are away."

Arthur nodded. "And if we should be attacked?"

"Pray and fight."

Minutes later, Milo found himself in a huge, low building: the stables. The war-fervor had been replaced with stiff nervousness, all the soldiers pacing the walls and gripping their poleaxes too tightly. There was still the distant noise of clanging steel, the rustling of many feet, and the shrill echoes of women's screams.

Baal stalked down the dark rows,

steer. And watch for low trees."

"Where are we going? We won't just stumble onto them."

"We don't have to," Baal said softly, taking out a dark black handgun and tossing it to Milo. Milo caught it and almost dropped it. The metal felt slimy, alive. "I know where it is they convene."

Milo did not want to know how Baal knew. "Let's just go," he said instead.

Baal turned his stallion with a whip of the reins. Milo gave the mare a bump. She trundled after the stallion, gradually falling into a canter behind him. Baal exited the castle on the eastern side, riding along the tall, black wall of the castle to a black road that snaked into the forest. Milo let the mare follow the stallion as the shifting shadows of the trees seemed to draw Milo into a trance of safety.

After a few minutes, the two reined up as Baal hushed the horses. Milo heard the distant din again, but this time, it was of clashing steel and galloping horses. "Arthur's troops must have engaged the

He kicked the mare again, his sense of urgency rising, his blood pumping through his veins. He rode, looking always over his shoulder, jerking around at the cackle of a raven. The crossroads was a mirage of moonlit leaves, but Milo proceeded to the bridge. The sounds of battle seemed to be nearer, then all around him. He was between battles, where moonbeams illuminated slashing, screaming figures.

Milo stopped at the bridge. He hid the mare behind some tall bushes and scampered toward the hulking mill. He slunk through the foliage, gun in one hand and fear in the other. He had not actually killed anyone, like Baal had. He had always imagined it to be very romantic and heroic. This seemed like killing mice.

Voices inside brought the focus of the firelight-lined door back into his mind's eye. They were saying something; Milo had to stoop nearer to hear. Something about battle plans...

Milo could wait no longer. The crashes of undergrowth sounded all around him,



Cartoon by Caldwell Tanner

quickly looking in the stalls. "Do you know how to ride?" he asked distractedly. The shadows of the stalls made him appear as a nightmare does: immediate and warped.

"I think so," Milo said. He was only half lying. He had ridden for about fifteen minutes at a summer camp in Vermont when he was nine.

"Grab that one," Baal muttered, vaguely gesturing to a stall next to his. A small, broad mare blinked over the wall at Milo, ears twitching. She looked harmless enough.

Baal had picked a stallion, black with long legs. The ego on that one, thought Milo. With many a whisper and a soft pat, Milo edged into the stall, right up to the saddle. The mare stared at him and snorted softly. Milo eased himself up into the saddle, and, after only a few tries, managed to right himself in an adequate riding manner.

Baal nodded. "Nudge her to go forward, pull back to stop. Turn your body to

rebels at the bend." He sounded half delirious with calculation. "They shouldn't have taken the bait," he was saying.

"What do we do about it?" Milo felt urgency creep back into his spirit, a strange adrenaline taking over. He felt the lives of good men were at stake, and he was doing nothing.

"Ride on. Ride to the mill—"

"The mill?"

"Yes, that is where they are. Follow this road to a crossroads. Do not stop there, it may be a trap. Turn left and ride to the bridge, and you will know your surroundings. Kill all you find. Then ride back up the road to meet me. We will have to aid in the battle, I'm afraid. In this darkness, no one is an ally." With that, he gave his horse a kick and was gone.

Milo did not know what to think. He was alone with a horse, a gun, and his fears. But he must carry out the task.

But why me, he thought. Why am I even here? Why am I special?

then a splash echoed in his ears. The battle had reached the river. He had one chance. He pushed open the door.

The scene hit him immediately. Three men, all with swords in their hands, grouped around a figure on the floor. The figure was crumpled under a black cloak. Milo saw a flash of red leaking from beneath. It shivered, squirmed, and moaned. The three men had been hitting it with the flats of their swords. A defenseless person.

It had never been that Milo would have had such a reaction to such dishonor. He felt a white rage, not just one of anger, but one of purpose. Somehow, he knew that these men deserved to die. And die they would.

Milo stared into their eyes. One of them grinned a nasty grin and said, "Another one, eh?"

But their time was up. Milo, lava burning through his eyes, had raised the gun. "No," he whispered, "the last one."

Ensworth High School Creates Co-Ed Competition

by WILL DELOACHE
Co-Managing Editor

For the last three years, one of the most frequently discussed about issues concerning the future of private-school education in Nashville has been the development of Ensworth High School. When it was first revealed that Ensworth would be expanding its elementary school to include a ninth-through-a-twelfth-grade, a minor eruption occurred not only around the MBA campus but also around the city. Schools from all over Nashville were left wondering how a new private school, containing approximately four-hundred-fifty students, would affect each of their institutions. Would attending EHS become a presupposed decision for those attending Ensworth elementary school? When making a high school decision, would boys and girls be swayed more by the pull of a co-educational experience with the introduction of another co-ed school? These were just a few of the many questions that Nashville parents and students were left to ponder.

As the first year of Ensworth High School's existence comes to a close, most of these questions are still unanswered. However, through an interview with Ensworth High School Headmaster David Morgan and Athletic Director Ricky Bowers, the *Bell Ringer* has tried to investigate Ensworth's philosophies about teaching and about its own future in order to help understand EHS's impact on our community at MBA and also throughout Nashville.

The decision to found the high school was made because, in Mr. Morgan's words, "there appeared to be a niche for a co-ed school of this caliber around Nashville." While MBA and Harpeth Hall offer exceptional educational experiences, they obviously cannot fulfill the needs of a student seeking a co-educational school, just as EHS cannot fulfill the needs of a student seeking a single-sex education.

The *Bell Ringer's* very own Mr. Gaither commented that "Ultimately, Ensworth High School provides still another co-ed institution, in the manner of Brentwood Academy, FRA, BGA, etc." He went on to advocate the benefits of attending MBA, saying, "I firmly believe that a single-sex education is superior to the co-ed experience for several reasons, not least of which is the practically fraternal bonding which occurs among the students here. Since I came to MBA, in 1971, many private schools have opened in Nashville. Not one has matched MBA for either the extent or the quality of its programs."

With the opening of Ensworth High School, students will certainly have a broader range of choice coming out of elementary school. When asked about the benefit of Ensworth to the community, Coach Ricky Bowers commented that "it is necessary for parents, teachers, administrators, and other adults to seek what is best for individual children. [Whether one chooses to go to MBA, USN, Ensworth, Hume Fogg, etc.], it is good that there are options for families."

The choice between these schools extends much further than the presence or absence of both male and female students. Ensworth's teaching philosophy presents an area of considerable contrast between most other schools in Nashville. While MBA offers a traditional college preparatory education, Ensworth has decided to institute a skills-based curriculum, focused on teaching students the ability to gather knowledge for themselves. They have developed a complex curriculum that centers on the idea of honing "skills that cut across traditional disciplinary boundaries and enhance one's ability to grow and learn," according to the school's curriculum literature.

Because EHS is still in its first year as a school, it is impossible to tell how well this unique philosophy will work on students. Before anyone can decide whether a skills-based or a content-based curriculum is better, we must first allow Ensworth's curriculum to be tested. And even after that test, it is important to realize that different styles of learning suit different students. Ensworth's new curriculum will provide students with an additional option in terms of teaching philosophy, and this can only help to upgrade the quality of education around Nashville.

Ensworth has also decided to institute an integrated mathematics and an integrated science program, which will combine the first few years of each subject into overarching courses. In math, Algebra II will join with Geometry to form two years of an

integrated course that will cover both subjects together over a span of two years. The science program combines biology, chemistry, and physics into a three-year course of increasing complexity, with each section being taught by a different teacher. This system does, of course, present possible problems, such as the rapid jumps between subjects and the limitations put on the number of possible AP level courses one can take before graduating. To combat this problem of AP course options in the science department, Ensworth only requires a student to take the first two years of integrated science, allowing the last two years for AP courses. In the next few years, it will be important and exciting to observe closely the results that this new type of curriculum produces.

These radical curriculum decisions at the new Ensworth high school pose some interesting questions for the future of other schools all around the city. Will schools attempt to adapt to this new system that is being brought into Nashville education? Will MBA grow closer to Harpeth Hall and Saint Cecilia? Will we adhere to our traditional roots and remain as a separate choice for students entering high school? Will Ensworth even have an effect on the decisions being made by schools in Nashville?

Only the future will answer these questions, but until then it is important for

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The OC Rules MBA Televisions on Thursday Nights

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connection that so many claim with the show on a very personal level? "Everything seems the way we wish everything could be, so...there's something special about thinking it's real," said Lucas Lloyd, and perhaps that is what makes it so popular and successful—that it somehow has created such an appealing life that an average guy could then take the show and make it very real in his imagination, secretly carrying the latest events as if they unfolded in real time during the next week. But since when has desperately breaking down into tears over a girl, and (as occurred on a recent episode) listening to Boyz II Men under the covers to wallow in misery over relationship issues been something that anyone would want to watch on a school night? As ridiculous and contrived as many of the plots may appear, with a constant barrage of affairs, unintended children, and old relationships dredged from the past, there is something very real about the reactions of the characters (or at least that sort of ideal reality). Eric Hagemeyer commented, "The dialogue is much more realistic... it's just comfortable," and it seems that so much of the appeal is drawn from that fact. It is "comfortable," even with the clean, appealing scenery, never-ending wealth, and the afore-

mentioned attractive women. Nevertheless sex, alcohol abuse, problems with the law, and even friendship strains plague the characters' lives, each with substantial consequences. But even the problems are contained and echo within a compact universe. Tight dialogue and plots often come full circle in a reassuring predictability, for both good and bad. In each episode, the lives of four central characters create a constantly swirling range of emotion, which spans the spectrum from depression to an uplifting optimism; it's all one great big fantasy that is so readily adopted and so quickly becomes addicting as the plots constantly leave circles unfinished from week to week.

The question remains: did the culture of MBA and those like it around the country create the entertainment trends which gave birth to this show, or is it merely that the screenwriters happened upon untested ground and we simply chose to accept it? As the reality TV craze has become a central part of television entertainment, could it be that that powerful trend created this show? With normal people thrust into the spotlight in all their normalcy and flaws, viewers eagerly consumed the idea that watching other people live could be amusing. But while that can't be the root of this new growth, *The OC* does attempt to create more realistic characters in artificially constructed situations, realizing that if the viewer accepts the characters, they will also accept the plot as well. Once the people and events become real, the crushes become more than

worthless whims and sexual desires, they become something to be closely watched and anxiously awaited. After we have followed their lives for two years, and treated the first episode as the beginning of each character's life, each action and sensation becomes the result of a character quite comprehensible in his flaws and desires. As we watch them live and refer to the past that we have seen, suddenly they're not recalling their own life, but one that we have shared with them.

In addition, the careful integration of the rising indie music scene into each episode has done a tremendous amount to enhance the subconscious conviction that all of this is taking place just across the next hill in the American Eden of California. Despite a backlash from many denouncing the commercialism of the publicity, countless bands including "Rooney," "Death Cab for Cutie," "Ryan Adams," "The Thrills," "Modest Mouse" and "Rachael Yamagata" have made physical appearances or significant contributions to the soundtrack for episodes. Seth's walls are covered by posters of Ben Folds and Nirvana, and he really is passionate about his music, something few, if any, other TV characters have been. The idea that he defines himself by the music has a tremendous impact on making him come into being as more than lines delivered by an actor, but a real, feeling, emotional teenager. It's just another way in which somehow we can happily convince ourselves that we have that connection be-

tween two people who know each other like the best of friends, because it is our life too, for we understand them, and we know exactly why they feel the way they do. Sure, it's sad and it's happy and it's shallow, but we'd like to give it so much more meaning. Bottom line: ... it works. I'm hooked.

So what does all of this mean? That we've become a generation who is tired and worn out from the boring, normal problems of high school and prefers to live for one hour a week in California where rain only falls when an episode requires an atmosphere of great sadness and pensive reflection? That we're all decadent and simply desirous of sex, wealth, and general immorality? I'm not entirely sure, but I don't think so. Those who watch the show regularly unanimously agree it seems to be going downhill as the plotlines are being over-used and recycled, and the outlandish twists are becoming increasingly so (you can't convince me the lesbian bit was anything more than a viewer hook), and, most importantly, now that Summer and Seth are back together for the 801st time, there can't possibly be anything new to happen. But this is their senior year on the show, so unless the show plans on being dragged into a slow and painful death as it stretches into the oblivion of season 52, it will have to end very soon. So there it will stand in its own skewed perfection, holding something different for everyone who chooses to tune in and commit to it. So say what you will, I'm not sure why, but I'll keep watching.

Fifty Straight Days of Chili: A *BR* Exclusive

by **PIERCE SANDWITH**
Staff Writer

Of all the food served in the lunchroom at MBA, the only true constant is the chili, which comes in many varieties such as white bean, homestyle, and - my personal favorite - two-alarm chili. After seeing chili on the menu for several days in a row, I began to keep track of how many straight days chili was served. This tally had just reached the fifty consecutive days mark when I decided to figure out just exactly why chili was served so often.

After meeting with the head of the lunchroom staff, Susan Davenport, I found out that there was "no real reason" why chili, their "signature soup," was served every day, but that it was a "big favorite of the faculty and student body" and it was the best soup for the cold weather. This answer removed one of my biggest fears - that the chili was the same batch made over and over. Instead, it seems, a new batch is made every day.

Once I had figured out why the chili was made every day, I chose to figure out why the chili was so popular. I wanted to know from people around school

whether the chili served every day was really that good. To discover the truth, my obvious choice was the chili expert here at MBA, Mr. Mike Caldwell, so I went to him



Senior Pierce Sandwith gets the scoop on chili at MBA. As of Tuesday, chili was served for 53 straight days.

to "get the scoop" on MBA's chili ranking. When I told Mr. Caldwell that chili had been served for the last fifty days, he told me that, out of these fifty days, he had had "ten days of chili" and that he thought the cafeteria "makes good chili." His only complaint was not about the constant serving of chili, but instead about the "big chunks of tomatoes" in what he calls his "fall-back food." Perhaps the lunch staff should reevaluate their recipe.

Although the cafeteria has served chili for the last fifty days, they must be doing something right, because there have obviously been no real complaints or grumbings about the chili. I urge you to join me in keeping score of the chili count, but do not shun the chili, and follow the chili-eating lead of our resident chili-gourmet, Mr. Caldwell.

As of last Thursday, March 17, chili had been served in the cafeteria for fifty straight days. By the time this article is published, the count will be up to fifty-five straight days of chili (if it is served every day this week). How long will it last? (Editor's note: chili was served on both Monday and Tuesday of this week.)

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(left to right) Sophomores Chris Geer, Chris Smith, Will Turner, Rich Tompkins, Douglas Foote, and Matt Crook walk into the dance.



(left to right) Seniors Claire Stadler, Matt Eskind, and Tori Patterson.



Tom Nagle and Caroline Anderson are ready to dance.



(left to right) Seniors Chambliss Shillinglaw, Matt Eskind, Leonard Edwards, Jay Pilkerton, and Bransford Maxwell. Bransford looks pretty excited to be wearing that tight silver shirt.



(l to r) Seniors Clay Cooper and Brian "Farva" Harris...the coolest guys at the dance.



Senior Class President William Benson looks a bit confused while sitting with Elle Worsham. It appears he is not pleased that Mr. Tillman is taking his picture.



The theater was packed with people dancing the entire night.



(left to right) Freshman Austin Branstetter and senior Hunter Branstetter. Goofy smiles must run in the family.



(l to r) Juniors Katie Fredericks, Maddie McCord, Ginny Brown, Bracey Stewart, Argle Johnson, Jillian Thompson, Christine Riley, Sarah Anne Spaulding, Melissa Woods.



(left to right) Seniors Matt Bubis, Chad Hume, Grant Thomas, Jesse Wright, Bryant Hahnfeldt, Juniors Luke Brown and Rob Phipps.



(left to right) Seniors Aian Higgins, Ryan Burns, and Hughes Tipton pose for Mr. Tillman's camera. After that he wrote them some poetry.



Junior Grace Herbert and sophomore David Howe take a break from dancing to pose for Mr. Tillman's camera.



Cartoon by Caldwell Tanner

MBA Drops the Ball on Paris Hilton and *The Simple Life*

by HUNTERBRANSTETTER
Features Editor

MBA really dropped the ball on this one. Either over Presidents' day weekend or during the teacher in-service (sometime around January 25), Mr. Tillman received a voicemail message stating that the caller was a producer for *The Simple Life* from Burbank, California. The caller stated that she knew MBA was an all-male school and was interested in filming a show on campus. Mr. Tillman never returned the call.

When subjected to grueling questioning, Mr. Tillman first tried to poetry his

way out of it, but under further pressure, he cracked and admitted that he thought the call was a joke. This theory is validated by the fact that he never told anyone about the call, yet suddenly the student body was abuzz about Paris Hilton (and Nicole Richie, whom nobody likes) coming for a day.

The call was most likely a fake, and if it wasn't, the school probably wouldn't have been too keen on the idea of two rich, vapid, and meretricious women coming to make a mockery of the school on cable television. Still, one can only dream of what a fine day it would have been and all the shenanigans that were to be had.

A Modest Response

continued from p. 2

liken our student body to Nazi Germany, this tactic of designing language to assail a group was used by Hitler to vilify the Jews.

As Mr. Gaither said in the Cum Laude induction speech, the stronger the satire the more strongly the writer feels about his subject. Both Clayton and James wrote their pieces to point out problems or potential problems in the world around us. In the weight room shortly after the last issue was released, I overheard one coach tell another, "I understand that it was supposed to be 'satire' [with the finger quotation mark], but I don't think it was very funny." In the Jonathan Swift tradition of satire, humor takes a back seat to content; it was not necessary for the pieces to be laugh-out-loud funny to be relevant. Moreover, the day the articles ran, I heard another teacher definitively decree that *The Bell Ringer* would not be able to publish "whatever it wanted" anymore. Since MBA is a private school, it can censor whatever it wants from our publications, but every issue of *The Bell Ringer* is read by at least one teacher in whom the administration places trust.

Much of the anger about the pieces stemmed from the satire itself. Although all of the pieces were titled "A Modest Proposal..." after Jonathan Swift's brilliant piece about eating babies to control the Ireland's population and famine problems and bore a disclaimer clearly explaining that the pieces were not to be taken seriously, some still did not take the works in context. Still, this defensive feeling would not have arisen if the two pieces had not in some way resonated with the students and staff. The other two modest proposals, pertaining to the motto and advisory, while entertaining, were not contentious. Though their purposes were benign, both "A Modest Proposal to Stop Homosexuality" and "A Modest Proposal for School Athletics" clearly illustrated that, at least on some minute level at MBA, these issues evoke strong emotions and deserve to be addressed with clarity and understanding.

Service Club Keeps MBA Involved With The Community

by JUSTIN HALL
Assistant Sports Editor

While upholding the tradition of the world-renowned gentlemen, scholars, and athletes that MBA students are, many would question what else we have time for. Yet many students, hard as it is to believe, strive to do more. For these super-achieving multi-taskers, there even exists a special club for outreach into the community in the area of service. This club has been in existence for years, but many do not know how large an impact MBA's Service Club has not just on the individual groups but on the community as a whole.

The MBA Service Club oversees many different branches of service, including Special Olympics, Soup Kitchen, trail building, invasive plant removal, tutoring, and raising money through Titans and Vanderbilt parking. Led by seniors Brewer Adams, Cotton Clark, Andy Alsentzer, Matthew Christie, Chris Gioia, David Pass, Bryant Hahnfeldt, Matt Clair, and Matt Eskind, the club is having an outstanding year. The seniors have really made the difference this year. "They do all the work, and set much of the agenda," says Gordon Chenery, the faculty advisor/sponsor for the club.

The Service Club has also branched out this year, taking on new challenges such as organizing the Tsunami relief dance. A huge success, the

dance raised over \$3500, and had the added benefit of having \$1000 of that amount matched by a very generous alumnus, Rob Barrick.

Yet it's the students involved in community service around MBA who make the club such a huge success. Senior Andrew Barge says, "Service is a way of improving the world we live in. It's just right to give back to the community." It is this "volunteer spirit and charity," says Gordon Chenery, that has led to such a fantastic success in the area of service this year.

Most students enjoy participating in the regular service projects such as Soup Kitchen and Special Olympics. Junior Kevin Seitz enjoys these projects, especially Soup Kitchen, because "it's service that has instant gratification—you can see the work benefiting the people directly, and it is fun to get to know them."

It is MBA's dedication to service which sets the school apart from most other private institutions. Nearly every weekend MBA has a service project going on, whether through the service club, individual students' efforts, or class service projects, so it's easy to get involved. Mr. Chenery and the other Service Club reps have had "a fantastic year... and are most proud" of all the volunteers this year. If you're interested in service, just contact any one of the members of the Service Club to find a project that will be fun and rewarding for you.

Lacrosse Starts Strong

by CHRIS GIOIA
Co-Managing Editor

After a hard loss to MUS during the semi-final round of last year's state tournament, the MBA lacrosse team returns this season with a sole purpose: attaining a state championship. On February 10th, lacrosse players assembled on the track to undergo a rigorous fitness test created by Coach Scott O'Neal. Three days of intense tryouts ensued, including the lacrosse team's first introduction to the ever-controversial yet indisputably-helpful 6:30 a.m. workouts. After making cuts, the coaches created a team with a healthy balance of seasoned veterans and fresh underclassmen. The team continued to practice, lifting three mornings per week and working hard after school.

After losing three-year varsity goalie David Regan to graduation last year, the team now looks to sophomore Carver Morgan to step up as its goalie. The team also has elected its captains for this season: Ryan Burns, Clay Caroland, and Ben Turk.

On February 26, the team faced its first opponent, MUS, in a scrimmage at MUS. Missing several players due to injuries and a hockey game that night, the team still felt ready to engage MUS despite a relatively short amount of practice time in the few weeks leading up to the game. The scrimmage was not the best performance by the

team, but it helped the coaches realize what aspects of the game needed more attention.

On March 2, the team faced Vanderbilt's Club Lacrosse team in a scrimmage, and although losing by one goal, the team saw much improvement from the scrimmage at MUS. Then on March 4 the team played its first game of the season against Westminster from Atlanta. This performance was also not the best the team could deliver, and after the loss Coach Cooper scheduled a 6:30 a.m. practice for the next morning. Although players resented this practice, they knew it was necessary after their performance of the previous night.

The next week the team faced USN on March 9 and won handily with a score of 11-4. Finally the players had found their groove and were beginning to show their potential. Goalie Carver Morgan had a great game, making 12 saves. Playing Father Ryan on March 11, the team had its best performance to date and utterly destroyed Father Ryan's team. Over spring break the team will travel to Orlando, Florida where it will play four teams from Texas.

After spring break, the team urges the student body to support the team at upcoming home games against MUS, Farragut, USN, and several other teams. Also, in late April the team will travel to Washington D.C. where it will face St. Albans. This game will give the MBA lacrosse team the opportunity to prove that Southern lacrosse is not a joke!

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MBA Students Get Involved With Nashville's Hispanic Achievers Program

by SPENCER CUMMINGS &
DENIS BERMUDEZ
Staff Writers

The Hispanic population of Nashville, having grown 630% between 1990 and 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau), is estimated to be nearing 100,000. This astounding increase has reshaped Nashville's demography and its approach to immigrant assistance. In 2001, the YMCA started the Hispanic Achievers Program to provide support for these immigrants and their families. The main goal of the program is to empower the Hispanic youth to complete their high school education and provide them with the skills needed to attend college.

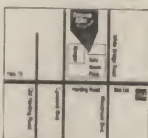
In addition to its concentration on youth, the program also helps adults to assimilate into American culture. Hispanic Professionals in the Nashville area serve as mentors, and MBA students, along with the help of Mrs. Villavicencio and Denis Bermudez, serve as mentors in the English as a Second Language classes.

Meeting two Saturdays each month at Belmont University, MBA volunteers tutor Hispanic adults in beginner, intermediate, and advanced English. Focusing on pronunciation and vocabulary, we improve their communication skills, which are fundamental to their success in American society. Conversing with Hispanic participants not only benefits them, but allows us to learn about their reasons for moving to America and the struggles they encounter.

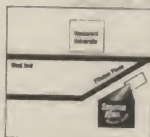
Isalia Lara, a Hispanic Achiever, is a 26-year-old from Veracruz, Mexico who moved here for a better life and more opportunities. She left behind her law studies at Golfo de Mexico University and her whole family, except her three young children. Currently packing chocolate boxes for a living, she hopes Hispanic Achievers can help her keep her children in school and improve her English communication skills.

MBA students' work with the Hispanic Achievers Program not only benefits our Hispanic pupils but breaks down stereotypes and exposes us to a growing culture in Nashville.

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MBA's Adaptation of Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*

by MACLEAN GRINDELL
Staff Writer

I was disappointed, after the teaser in assembly, to hear some negative and critical remarks about the play *As I Lay Dying*. I fear that some of those watching the brief excerpt had the misconception that theater's intent is to offer a comedic production, put together for the sole purpose of amusing the audience with slapstick and asinine plots.

Although I enjoy a good joke just as much as the next person, all who attend the theater should have a deeper understanding of the diverse dynamics concerning theater. There is a difference between comedy and drama. Both should be able to stimulate the mind to gaze about its surroundings with an ever-changing insight and challenge one's beliefs about how life can function, not just play to the brainless laugh or two.

William Faulkner's story about the Bundren family argues with the everyday belief of how a rural family in America can function properly. This play reveals how a family, surrounded by illegitimacy and adultery, torn by death and psychotic behavior, can manage to operate in its corrupt world. The play is designed to awaken in the audience a new way of seeing life and the world

about them. Some of my fellow students, however, failed to deal rationally with their own feelings of discomfort caused by unfamiliar situations. This saddened me.

I agree that the play featured some dark and heavy topics which may be unappealing to those unaccustomed to facing reality, but no one can dispute the time and talent which went into producing this work. The play was incredibly demanding and difficult, and the lead actors William Schuller, Clayton Lanthart, Nelson Berry, Will Holt, Tommy Corts, and Rob Beasley should be commended for their commitment to discovering the motivations and emotions of their characters, which were so deep and dynamic.

MBA should be proud that such talent will represent the United States in Scotland in the Fringe Festival this summer. Dr. Fuller has done an exceptional job of adapting this novel into a play which gives the actors the feeling of truly owning the play and offers them the freedom to explore their characters.

Commenting on why he chose this story for the competition, Dr. Fuller says, "As a Nobel Prize-winning writer from the South, Faulkner seemed like a natural choice. He is widely recognized as one of America's greatest modernist writers. I wanted a piece with some heft that would be both worthy of such effort and interesting and challenging to my students."

Dr. Fuller's adaptation is very inventive and original. It features songs by Marcus Hummon, awesome illusions of scenery, hovering coffins, and actors becoming animals and props. Fuller says he used the actors in this way because "Faulkner is very interested in our connections to nature, animals, and the land, so this style is particularly appropriate and helps illuminate

the novel's ideas. It's also just plain fun for the cast and hopefully for the audience as well."

MBA should be proud that such a magnificent and intellectually stimulating play, demonstrating the great potential of our actors, will represent our school and our country this summer in Scotland.

Ensworth High School

continued from p. 4

us as a community to all reap the benefits that the creation of a new school brings. Increased competition for the best students in Nashville can only cause MBA to reach new levels of success in all areas. As Mr. Morgan commented, "The more different kinds of schools we have, the better it is for the common good." Hopefully, the creation of Ensworth High School will increase the quality of schools all over Nashville, while also adding another choice to the mix.

When asked to comment on Ensworth's impact on MBA and the community, Mr. Gioia said, "I believe the competition of the Ensworth High School is good for MBA, other independent schools in Nashville, and the students and families in our city. Over the past fifty years many new schools have developed in Nashville, and throughout our country there have been other examples of K-8 schools building a high school. My hope is that there will be a good rivalry with Ensworth and that our schools will continue to define themselves by the character, achievement, and the balance of their programs and individuals."

Although, in the words of Coach Bowers, "Ensworth has had little or no impact on the high school athletic world," and although the effects of its new teaching philosophy have yet to be seen, we, at MBA, should take this new development as a chance to enhance or own school and further define our own educational philosophies.

Message In A Bottle

by TAYLOR SHOPE
Assistant Features Editor

It's amazing, really, what you find when you study abroad. Personally, I spent the whole flight to England thinking about how everything was going to be vastly different from what I was used to.

When I arrived at Eton, I noticed over the first few days of lessons that many, many things were very similar, even right down to the institutional food that we eat for all three meals out of the day. I'm sure that I noticed the differences between the two schools, but those were mainly structural differences, like the school being a boarding school rather than a day school. It's rather like living in a house with fifty brothers that are your age. Yes, there are disagreements between the boys, but there are also some fun things that happen in the house, like parties and snowball fights.

There are other differences as well, such as the school being religious-based and having chapel or church services five days a week, and the tailcoats that we have to wear to classes.

One of the things that is really scary is that some of the buildings on campus are the original buildings from 1540 when Henry VIII founded the school. The College Chapel, for instance, is one such building. The remarkable part of the student ethos is that they are surrounded by all of this history, yet are able to keep a new-worldliness about them; i.e. they watch *The OC* every Friday

night, as well as other assorted American TV shows, as well as soccer, rugby, snooker, and then cricket in the spring.

It's funny, for every person in my year and in my house, I can think of a Junior at MBA that has the same basic personality. The ties between the two schools are strong, even though the two were never related before Mr. Gioia became Headmaster at MBA. I honestly can say that I have had the time of my life here, and it will be hard for me to leave when the end of the half comes. I have made several close friends here, all of whom I will be hard-pressed to leave behind, as most of them I will never see again. On the lighter side of the news, I know both of the guys who are coming to MBA at the beginning of April. Tom Stourton and Tom Palmer are both outgoing and adventurous people, and both of them are looking forward to visiting the US of A and learning about our culture and our school.

If anyone in this year's sophomore class is wondering about whether or not to apply to go to Eton next year, my advice is to go ahead and apply. The only reservation that I had about going on this exchange during the academic year is taking my exams while at Eton. What I found, however, is that it isn't any different from taking them at home, except that you take them in the afternoon instead of in the morning, but that doesn't make any difference in the outcomes of each exam. In short, all of my expectations were either wrong completely, or exceeded in every way possible. I would not trade this experience for anything that exists in this world.



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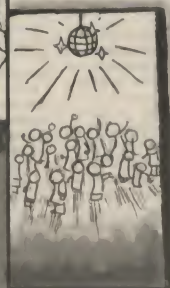
The Dance Recap with Jamie "Saturday Night" Tillman



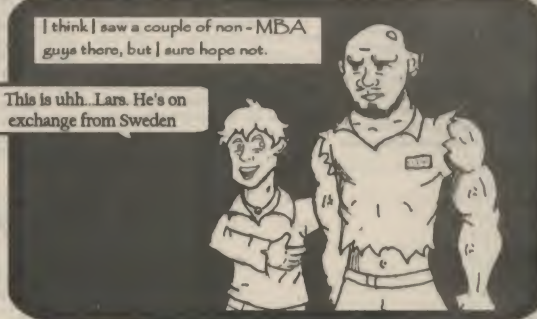
OMG!! I can't breathe but I look so hot!!



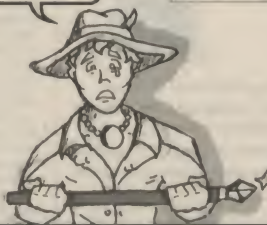
The girls were very.... scantily clad. I nearly sent a couple of them home to change clothes



This is uhh... Lars. He's on exchange from Sweden



I'll be back soon, I promise.



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